

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processor for processing a video signal,  
comprising:

aspect ratio information acquisition means for acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal;

aspect ratio conversion means for carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed video signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1, wherein the aspect ratio conversion means has an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed automatically based on information about the original video signal, and an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal;

background signal generation means for generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed video signal; and

video signal combination means for executing a process of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subjected to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 1, wherein the aspect ratio conversion means changes the aspect ratio of the original video signal by pixel number conversion.

5. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 1, wherein the aspect ratio conversion means changes the aspect ratio of the original video signal in such a manner that the image has roundness of 1, and has the maximum size fitting in a selected screen.

6. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 1, wherein the background signal generation means performs signal generation using a same signal format as that of the processed video signal generated by the aspect ratio conversion means, the generated background comprising images derived from at least one of a program filling in a rectangular region, images created in the bitmap format, and the JPEG (Joint Picture Experts Group) format.

7. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 1, wherein the video signal combination means determines a size of the video signal.

8. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 1, further comprising:

recording means for recording the synthesized video signal onto a removable recording medium.

9. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 8, wherein

the aspect ratio conversion means carries out aspect ratio conversion with respect to the original video signal in such a manner that the image recorded by an external device with the removable recording medium loaded therein has roundness of 1 and has the maximum size fitting in a particular screen reproducing the synthesized video signal.

10. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 8, wherein the background signal generation means generates a background signal of a same size as a screen that is selected for reproducing the synthesized video signal recorded on the removable recording medium in the external device, or a size needed for combination of video images.

11. (Previously Presented) The image processor according to claim 8, wherein when the image after conversion by the aspect ratio conversion means has an aspect ratio different from a preset aspect ratio at the time of recording, the video signal combination means adds the background video signal around the processed video signal to generate an image of the preset aspect ratio.

12. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for processing a video signal, comprising:

an aspect ratio information acquisition step of acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal;

an aspect ratio conversion step of carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1,

wherein the process of aspect ratio conversion includes an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed automatically based on information about the original video signal, and an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal;

a background signal generation step of generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed video signal; and

a video signal combination step of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subjected to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal.

13. (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 12, further comprising

a recording step of recording the synthesized video signal resulting from the signal combination onto a removable recording medium.

14. (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 13, wherein

the aspect ratio conversion step carries out the process of aspect ratio conversion with respect to the original video signal in such a manner that the image recorded in the removable medium in an external device has an roundness of 1 and has the maximum size fitting in a particular screen reproducing the synthesized video signal.

15. (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 13, wherein

the background signal generation step generates a background signal of a same size as the particular screen generating the synthesized video signal recorded on the removable recording medium in the external device, or a size needed for video image combination.

16. (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 13, wherein

in the video signal combination step, when at the time of recording the image after conversion has an aspect ratio different from a preset aspect ratio, the background video signal is added around the processed video signal to generate an image of the preset aspect ratio.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer program embedded on a computer-readable medium, the computer program configured to execute, on a computer system, a process of processing a video signal, comprising:

an aspect ratio information acquisition step of acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal;

an aspect ratio conversion step of carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed video signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1, wherein the process of aspect ratio conversion means includes an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed automatically based on information about the original video signal, and an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal;

a background signal generation step of generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed video signal; and

a video signal combination step of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subjected to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal.

18. (Currently Amended) The image processing method of claim 12, wherein the acquired aspect ratio information is a two-bit code indicating the process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal.

19. (New) The image processing method of Claim 18, wherein the first bit of the two-bit code is used to indicate whether the original video signal represents a signal having a 16:9 aspect ratio embedded in a signal having an aspect ratio of 4:3.